

The U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) coordinates and integrates federal research on changes in the global environment and their implications for society. The USGCRP began as a presidential initiative in 1989 and was mandated by Congress in the [Global Change Research Act of 1990](#) (P.L. 101-606), which called for “*a comprehensive and integrated United States research program which will assist the Nation and the world to understand, assess, predict, and respond to human-induced and natural processes of global change*.”

Global Change: Changes in the global environment (including alterations in climate, land productivity, oceans or other water resources, atmospheric chemistry, and ecological systems) that may alter the capacity of the Earth to sustain life. (from the [Global Change Research Act of 1990](#))

[Thirteen departments and agencies](#) participate in the USGCRP, which was known as the U.S. Climate Change Science Program from 2002 through 2008. The program is steered by the [Subcommittee on Global Change Research](#) under the [Committee on Environment and Natural Resources](#), overseen by the [Executive Office of the President](#), and facilitated by an [Integration and Coordination Office](#).

During the past two decades, the United States, through the USGCRP, has made the world's largest scientific investment in the areas of climate change and global change research. Since its inception, the USGCRP has supported research and observational activities in collaboration with several other national and international science programs.

These activities led to major advances in several key areas including but not limited to:

- Observing and understanding short- and long-term changes in climate, the ozone layer, and land cover;
- Identifying the impacts of these changes on ecosystems and society;
- Estimating future changes in the physical environment, and vulnerabilities and risks

associated with those changes; and

- Providing scientific information to enable effective decision making to address the threats and opportunities posed by climate and global change.

These advances have been documented in numerous [assessments](#) commissioned by the program and have played prominent roles in international assessments such as those of the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#)

. Program results and plans are documented in the program's annual report, [Our Changing Planet](#)

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